



CONVERSATION GUIDE

Scheduling 7-day Follow-up Appointments

Why is this important?

To improve patient care transitions, health, and reduce costs!

- Estimated ¼ of all 30-day readmissions are preventable and can be mitigated by close follow-up ¹.
- Several studies have shown early patient follow-up post-discharge reduces readmissions and improves care transitions.
 - Hospitals that administered multifaceted interventions that include 7-day appointments scheduled prior to discharge had decreased risk-standardized readmission rates. The 7-Day Pledge that incentivized patients and providers to complete primary care follow-up within 7 days also showed lower readmission rates².
 - One recent study of patients receiving follow-up within 7-days found patients had fewer 30- and 90-day readmissions³.
 - For heart failure patients, contact within 7 days of discharge was associated with lower odds of readmission⁴.



Fewer 30- and 90-day Readmissions



**> 1 in 5 report
social determinant
of health concerns**

Patient advisors recommend the following when talking to patients about follow-up appointments:

- Start the conversation early, have it often!
- Use plain language, keep it simple.
- Involve the family/caregiver whenever possible.
- Listen and validate patient/caregiver concerns.
 - Based on internal I-MPACT patient reported outcomes data, at least 1 in 5 patients have concerns related to affording medications and co-pays, transportation issues, etc.
 - Watch for cues that the patient has some of these concerns.
- Encourage the patient/caregiver to call with questions!
 - Include and highlight a contact number for questions in patient discharge instructions.
 - Explain what the patient/family can expect when they call (e.g. triage, an “on call” resource, voicemail system with someone calling back, etc.).
- For non-urgent issues, encourage use of the patient portal for questions, refills, communication with providers.
 - Ask the patient if they need help setting up their portal.
- When calling a provider’s office for an appointment, be sure to inform them that the patient had a recent hospital or skilled nursing facility stay.
 - If needed, assist the patient in calling their provider to schedule an appointment.
 - Inquire with providers about telehealth options available for follow-up appointments.



What do patients and caregivers need to know about the importance of scheduling a 7-day follow-up appointment?

It’s one of the most important things they can do to avoid another hospital stay!



If they aren’t feeling well, tell them to keep the appointment!

The provider will be able to help with current issues.



If they are feeling healthy, tell them to keep the appointment!

The provider will help patient understand next steps in disease management or rehabilitation, future tests/labs, etc.



Avoid assuming:

- Everyone has internet access or a smart phone.
- Older patients can’t navigate a telehealth visit or patient portal.

1. Auerbach AD, Kripalani S, Vasilevskis EE, et al. Preventability and Causes of Readmissions in a National Cohort of General Medicine Patients [published correction appears in JAMA Intern Med. 2016 Oct 1;176(10):1579]. JAMA Intern Med. 2016;176(4):484-493. doi:[10.1001/jamainternmed.2015.7863](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2015.7863)
2. Wiest, D., Yang, Q., Wilson, C., Dravid, N. Outcomes of a Citywide Campaign to Reduce Medicaid Hospital Readmissions With Connection to Primary Care Within 7 Days of Hospital Discharge. JAMA Netw Open. 2019;2(1):e187369. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.7369>
3. Bradley, E.H., Sipsma, H., Horwitz, L.I. et al. Hospital Strategy Uptake and Reductions in Unplanned Readmission Rates for Patients with Heart Failure: A Prospective Study. J GEN INTERN MED 30, 605–611 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-014-3105-5>
4. Lee, K.K., Yang, J., Hernandez, A.F., Steimle, A.E., Go AS. Post-discharge Follow-up Characteristics Associated With 30-Day Readmission After Heart Failure Hospitalization. Med Care. 2016;54(4):365-372. doi:10.1097/MLR.0000000000000492 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4800825/>